

NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE
CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2018

Present:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Carole Thorogood (Chair) |) | |
| Anja Beriro |) | |
| Mary Carswell |) | External governors |
| Trevor Clay |) | |
| Andrew Dickinson |) | |
| Gill Lane (minutes 1- 34) |) | |
| John van de Laarschot | | Chief Executive Officer |
| Becki Pate | | Staff governor |
| Liam Perkins | | Staff governor |
| Eseose Okotako | | Student governor |

In attendance:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Ian James | Clerk to the Corporation |
| Jo Clifford | VP Finance |
| James Whybrow | VP Partnerships, Apprenticeships & Enterprise |
| Emma Woods | Director of Quality |
| Zoe Butler | Director of Customer Experience |
| Ffyona Baker | Director of OD and HR |
| Tom Dick | Director of Curriculum |
| Simon Kirby | Director of Marketing and Communications |

PART 1

WELCOME

1 Liam Perkins and Eseose Okotako were welcomed to their first Board meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 Apologies were received from Richard Donovan, Andrew Unitt, Michael Wisher, Matthew Varley and Jane Peacock (ESFA).

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

4 **Resolved** that the minutes (Part 1) of the meeting held on 18 July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

Scorecard & KPI's report (ref: minute no. 339)

5 Governors had expressed some concern at the previous meeting that only 43% of staff had completed all five mandatory training modules and, in response to a request for an update, the Director of OD & HR advised that the number had now increased to 58%. The undertaking of the modules had now been tied in to the successful completion of probation for new staff and special arrangements were being made for sessional staff to complete them. The governors asked for further updates on this matter.

ESFA Assurance Review of 2017/18 (ref: minute no. 341)

6 The College had now been notified by the ESFA of the sample records from the ILR that they wished to review during the visit to the College which would take place in the week commencing 3 September. It had been noted that the College's Environmental and Sustainability Policy required two additions in relation to the control and disposal of waste and it was –

7 **Resolved** that the following be added to the College's Environmental and Sustainability Policy under paragraph 2.4:

- Dispose of waste using registered waste contractors, keeping records of licences to prove compliance for carrying the waste and of the final destination of the waste
- Observe and comply with waste regulations and directives for example, the Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive, Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulation 2010

POLICY REVIEWS

Curriculum Strategy

8 The Director of Curriculum introduced the proposed Curriculum Strategy commenting that this was in interim document pending the appointment of the Vice Principal Curriculum.

9 The governors made comments on the document as follows:

- there was little mention of part-time provision
- more should be included on the knowledge base of teaching staff
- the changed approach to the organisation of English & maths teaching and programmes of study through faculties should be referenced
- they queried whether 10% as a target for on-line study was sufficient

10 The Director undertook to make alterations to the Strategy to take these points into account in consultation with Mary Carswell. With the regard to the final point above, the Director commented that the College foresaw increases in the extent of on-line learning although this required careful planning to ensure the maintenance of high quality.

11 **Resolved** that, subject to the amendment of the Strategy to accommodate the comments made by governors, the Curriculum Strategy be approved

HE Strategy

12 The Director of Curriculum introduced the proposed HE Strategy on which the governors raised the following issues:

- the Strategy appeared to be aimed at attracting students locally whereas there was the opportunity to expand the offer to appeal to a wider audience and also emphasise the particular benefits of HE in FE such as small groups sizes and links to employers. The latter should also be reflected in the statements about ethos
- there should be more reference to the use and knowledge of current research to inform enhance the quality of teaching

- the document should state that the College is developing new and innovative programmes, there should be less emphasis on widening participation and a focus on developing links with feeder schools

13 The Director commented on the impact of the current arrangements for validation of HE programmes but was content to liaise with Mary Carswell and Gill Lane to amend the Strategy along the lines suggested by the governors.

14 **Resolved** that, subject to the amendment of the Strategy to accommodate the comments made by governors, the HE Strategy be approved

Modern Day Slavery Policy

15 The Board was asked to approve this Policy for 2018/19 and, retrospectively, for 2017/18. The VP Partnerships, Apprenticeships & Enterprise was asked to include more in the Policy about the action the College would take if it discovered any examples of Modern day Slavery.

16 **Resolved** that, subject to the addition requested by the Board, the Modern Day Slavery Policy be approved for 2017/18 and 2018/19

Safeguarding Policy

17 The Director of Customer Experience presented the revised Safeguarding Policy which had been revised to reflect the updated DfE guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018” which would come into force on 3 September 2018.

18 **Resolved** that the Safeguarding Policy be approved

FE & Apprenticeship Admissions Policy

19 The Board received a revised version of the Admissions Policy which was required in preparation for the ESFA Assurance Review.

20 The governors were keen to ensure that the College’s processes in relation to admissions did not present any barriers to enrolment and they queried the circumstances in which incoming students could be requested to undertake initial assessments which may appear to be a test for entry. It was suggested that reference to diagnostic tests could be removed from the Policy and that they should only be used where necessary.

21 Attention was also drawn to the use of taster and ‘meet the team’ sessions which the Board favoured but were inconsistent across faculties.

22 **Resolved** that, subject to the Board’s observations being taken into account, the Admissions Policy be approved

Procurement Policy

23 The Board received the Procurement Policy for approval and Anja Beriro offered some comments from her experience in contract law which she would provide outside the meeting. The governors also asked for the Policy to be amended to include an objective that contractors should be requested to provide work placements for students.

24 **Resolved** that, subject to the amendments referred to above, the Procurement Policy be approved

CURRICULUM & QUALITY REPORT

25 In view of the timing of this meeting during the enrolment period, the Board received an oral update via a PowerPoint presentation detailing the current position. The presentation also covered the current and projected outcomes in relation to 16-18 and adult achievement, the A level and GCSE results together with apprenticeships and subcontractor learner responsive. The report would be followed up by a written report at the next Board meeting.

Enrolments

26 The governors were pleased to note that the enrolment process was much improved from last year and had attracted positive feedback from students and parents. However, it was reported that there was a significant volume of students not attending the core enrolment sessions arranged during the main enrolment from 23rd to 31st August and asking to attend a drop-in session or not attending at all. These were being followed up diligently.

Achievement

27 The presentation provided the latest estimates of best/worst/expected achievement rates for 16-18 and adult provision.

A Levels

28 Achievement rates at AS level were static at whereas there had been a decline at A-level. However, pass rates at A level had improved by 2% for grades A to C and by 6% for grades A to E; the contrast with the achievement rates highlighting the significant issue of retention on these courses. The presentation detailed the actions being taken to improve the College's performance in this area including the recruitment of a new Head of Faculty tasked with undertaking a full review of provision and reporting to the SLT with recommendations by the end of August.

GCSE

29 The Board had been kept informed of the difficulties with GCSE English & maths which were common to most FE colleges. The achievement rate had declined for English and Maths from the previous year and the presentation provided the governors with a comprehensive account of the actions taken by management to address the issue. This included the devolution of English and maths to faculties for the new academic year.

Apprenticeships

30 The success rates for apprenticeships were also presented on a best/expected/worse case basis with the expected outturn around 72% for direct delivery and 55% for subcontracted (overall 61%). The presentation examined the weaknesses of the provision together with threats and opportunities and demonstrated the College's intention gradually to bring all apprenticeships into direct delivery by 2020/21.

Subcontractor Learner Responsive

31 This data was also presented on a best/expected/worse case basis with the expected success rates expected to be around 85% for 16-18 and 80% for adults.

SCORECARD & KPI'S REPORT

32 The Board received the monthly report setting out the College's KPI's which were RAG-rated and updated through a commentary explaining current progress. At this stage, retention rates had declined by 2% to 91.5%. Although this was below the College target of 92%, it was above the TU target of 91%.

33 Referring back to minute 5 above the Director of OD & HR distributed the latest figures related to the completion of mandatory training modules by staff.

34 Attention was drawn to the plan to undertake a survey of staff 18 months after the original survey and the Board discussed a suggestion that this was too long to wait. The CEO advised that it would be best to await the intended introduction of a pay spine and, in any event, the governors felt that 12 months was too short a period to assess the impact of action taken by management in response to the previous survey.

MARKETING UPDATE

35 The Director of Marketing and Communications provided a PowerPoint presentation detailing the scale and scope of the marketing campaign undertaken to attract enrolments for the new academic year. The campaign had involved a comprehensive range of techniques using social media, the website and digital communication. The presentation also included examples of the advertisements used based on the new branding.

36 Attention was drawn to the fact that the current website required updating and did not properly represent the merged College. The Director explained that a new website had been created and was ready to be launched but the SLT had decided to use the current website during the enrolment period in view of the access to course information which was familiar to College staff.

FINANCE

Management Accounts P11

37 The VP Finance presented the management accounts to 30 June 2018 which showed that the College remained ahead of budget at this stage with a year to date surplus of £3.149m against a budgeted deficit of £1.134m. This was accounted for by one-off items and phasing while below target income was mitigated by savings on both pay and non-pay costs. These savings were now sustained and should underpin the achievement of the budget. The year end position was now forecast at £1.87m deficit against a budgeted £1.93m (excluding capital grants) due to the profit on the sale of the Broadway premises.

38 The management accounts contained a full explanation of variances to budget and the governors queried various areas of the accounts including the underlying assumptions on the Early Years and Catering budgets which showed large variances from the original budget.

Long-term borrowing

39 At their previous meeting, the governors had asked for a report on the College's borrowing position bearing in mind the very high ratio of borrowing to income, due to reach 66% by 2020. The VP Finance presented the requested report and the governors discussed and acknowledged the importance of increasing the College's income in as many ways as possible over the next few years in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the College.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

UCU Ballot

40 The Director of OD & HR informed the Board that UCU had advised that they would be balloting their members in relation to possible industrial action in support of their pay claim for 5% (or £1500, which ever is the greater).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 4.30pm on Monday, 1 October 2018